

# The World We Live In

PHAENOMENOLOGICA  
SERIES FOUNDED BY H. L. VAN BREDA AND PUBLISHED  
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE HUSSERL-ARCHIVES

---

220

ALEXANDRU DRAGOMIR  
THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

---

Editorial Board:

Director: U. Melle (Husserl-Archief, Leuven) Members: R. Bernet (Husserl-Archief, Leuven), R. Breeur (Husserl-Archief, Leuven), S. IJsseling (Husserl-Archief, Leuven), H. Leonardy (Centre d'études phénoménologiques, Louvain-la-Neuve), D. Lories (CEP/ISP/Collège Désiré Mercier, Louvain-la-Neuve), J. Taminiaux (Centre d'études phénoménologiques, Louvain-la-Neuve), R. Visker (Catholic University of Leuven, Leuven)

Advisory Board:

R. Bernasconi (The Pennsylvania State University), D. Carr (Emory University, Atlanta), E.S. Casey (State University of New York at Stony Brook), R. Cobb-Stevens (Boston College), J.F. Courtine (Archives-Husserl, Paris), F. Dastur (Université de Paris XX), K. Düsing (Husserl-Archiv, Köln), J. Hart (Indiana University, Bloomington), K. Held (Bergische Universität Wuppertal), K.E. Kaehler (Husserl-Archiv, Köln), D. Lohmar (Husserl-Archiv, Köln), W.R. McKenna (Miami University, Oxford, USA), J.N. Mohanty (Temple University, Philadelphia), E.W. Orth (Universität Trier), C. Sini (Università degli Studi di Milano), R. Sokolowski (Catholic University of America, Washington D.C.), B. Waldenfels (Ruhr-Universität, Bochum)

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/6409>

Alexandru Dragomir

---

Gabriel Liiceanu • Catalin Partenie  
Editors

# The World We Live In

 Springer

Alexandru Dragomir

*Editors*

Gabriel Liiceanu  
University of Bucharest  
Romania

Catalin Partenie  
National School of Political Studies and Administration  
Bucharest, Romania

Translated by James Christian Brown  
University of Bucharest  
Romania

This book has been translated as part of the project of promoting Romanian philosophy implemented by the Romanian Society for Phenomenology with the support of the Romanian Cultural Institute and Volvo—Life-for-Life Foundation. Please visit [www.romanian-philosophy.ro](http://www.romanian-philosophy.ro).

Paul Balogh checked the English translation in all its stages; his observations and suggestions contributed significantly to its final form.

ISSN 0079-1350                      ISSN 2215-0331 (electronic)  
Phaenomenologica  
ISBN 978-3-319-42853-6              ISBN 978-3-319-42854-3 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-42854-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016948209

Translation from the Romanian language edition: Alexandru Dragomir, *Crise banalități metafizice*, published by Editura Humanitas, Bucharest © Humanitas, 2004. All Rights Reserved.

© Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2017

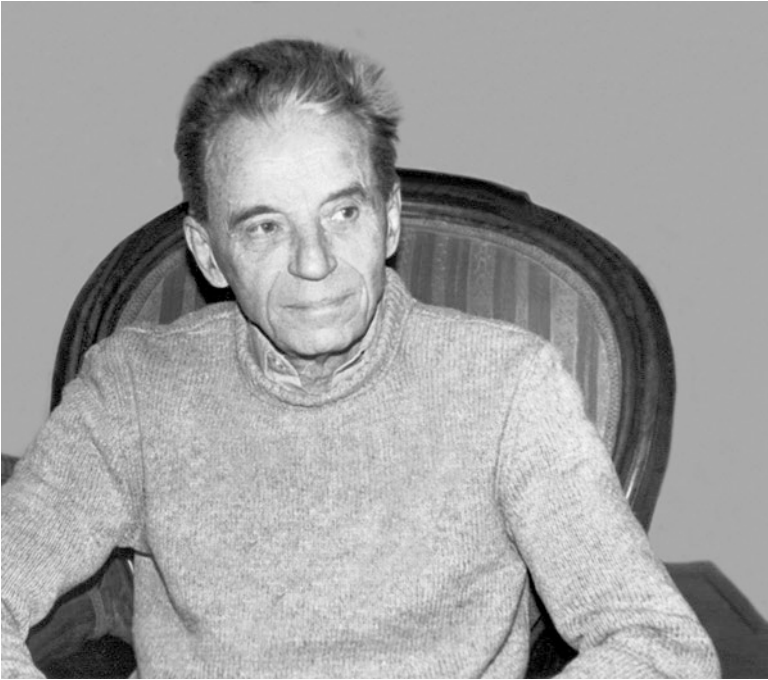
This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature  
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG Switzerland



Alexandru Dragomir in the mid 1980s, during one of his lectures  
Photograph courtesy of Humanitas Publishing House (© 2016)

## About the Author

Alexandru Dragomir was a Romanian philosopher, born in 1916. After studying law and philosophy at the University of Bucharest (1933–1939), he left Romania to study for a doctorate in philosophy in Freiburg, Germany, under Martin Heidegger. He stayed in Freiburg for two years (1941–1943), but before defending his dissertation, he was called back to Romania for military service and sent to the front. After 1948, historical circumstances forced him to become a clandestine philosopher: he was known only within a very limited circle, and even his friends did not know whether or not he was writing down his thoughts. He died in 2002 without ever publishing anything. It was only after his death that Dragomir's notebooks came to light. His work has been published posthumously in five volumes by Humanitas, Bucharest. Two of these volumes have been published in French translation by Jean Vrin, Paris, *Banalités métaphysiques* (2008) and *Cahiers du temps* (2010), the latter being the fruit of his lifelong research on the topic of time (to be published in German translation by Königshausen & Neumann, 2017). The journal *Studia Phaenomenologica* has devoted a complete issue to Dragomir (IV, 3–4, 2004), including accounts of his personality and work (in French, German, and English) together with a series of texts by him translated into French and English. In 2009, the Alexandru Dragomir Institute for Philosophy was founded in Bucharest as an independent research institute under the auspices of the Romanian Society for Phenomenology.

# Preface

This first volume of the work of Alexandru Dragomir, which marks his posthumous literary debut, brings together some of the lectures that he gave between 1985 and 2000 in Gabriel Liiceanu's house, in the presence of a audience initially consisting, in addition to the host, of Sorin Vieru, Andrei Pleșu and (until 1989) Thomas Kleininger. From 1995, these three were joined by Horia Patapievici and, in 1998–1999, Catalin Partenie (who had known Dragomir since 1987).

Not all the lectures have been preserved. Of the earliest ones, given in 1985–1986, nothing remains but the participants' notes. Those given between 1986 and 1988 were all recorded on magnetic tape by Gabriel Liiceanu, though not all the recordings are now extant. Of those given after 1989, only a very few were recorded on tape, mostly by Sorin Vieru. Of the rest of the lectures, whose number and subject matter can no longer be precisely determined, nothing remains. The lecture 'About the Speck of Dust', given in the spring of 1987, which the two who heard it then—Sorin Vieru and Gabriel Liiceanu—remember as being one of the best of all Dragomir's lectures, is completely lost.

The present volume thus brings together all that has been preserved of these lectures and that could serve as raw material for subsequent working up. By working up, we mean that neither the existing notes nor the audio recordings have been reproduced exactly. Starting from the raw form, the two editors have proceeded to reconstruct the text, with the aim of obtaining a final result as coherent, clear and concise as possible. This reconstruction called for the following types of operation: (1) the elimination of certain redundant or excessively digressive passages; (2) the working up of certain passages, ranging from slight stylistic adjustment to complete reformulation; (3) the combination of certain passages in an order different from the initial one and, at times, the addition of passages further developing an idea and in the spirit of Alexandru Dragomir's thinking; and (4) the identification and checking of certain quotations and the exact indication of their sources.

In reconstructing the text, we have in a number of cases used the notes Dragomir made when preparing the lecture in question. The reconstruction has deliberately kept the colloquial tone of the lectures, together with that direct manner of attacking

a problem that reproduces the impression of ‘raw thinking’ characteristic of their author.

Like any thinker, Dragomir keeps returning to certain ideas. Thus, on several occasions, readers will meet, in new formulations, ideas with which they have already been familiarized.

All our interventions in the raw material of the lectures are mentioned in detail in the explanatory note that precedes each text.

The reconstruction of the first part of the volume was made by Gabriel Liiceanu and that of the second part by Catalin Partenie. The lectures in the two parts of the volume have been arranged on a chronological basis.

One lecture included in the Romanian edition, on the play *The Lost Letter* by the nineteenth-century Romanian writer Ion Luca Caragiale, has been omitted from this volume as it presupposes a good knowledge of the play, a well-known text in Romania but unfamiliar to non-Romanian readers.

We would like to thank Cristian Ciocan, the Romanian Cultural Institute and the Romanian Society of Phenomenology: without their generous support this English translation would not have been possible. We would also like to thank James Christian Brown, for his accurate translation, and Paul Balogh, whose pertinent comments and suggestions contributed significantly to the final form of this translation. Last but not least, we would like to thank the editorial team at Springer, especially Dr Cristina Alves dos Santos and Anita van der Linden-Rachmat, for their interest and support.

Bucharest, Romania

Gabriel Liiceanu  
Catalin Partenie



# Contents

<b>The Notebooks from Underground</b> .....	1
The Start of the Race: From Transylvania to the Old Kingdom and on to Freiburg im Breisgau .....	1
The Paradise of Freiburg .....	3
Farewell, Heidegger! The Closing of the Ways .....	9
Entering the Underground: Noica and Dragomir .....	12
The Meeting on Strada Arcului .....	18
A Lesson in Thought .....	21
The Lucaci Cul-de-sac Lectures .....	23
The Opening of the Archive .....	24
<i>Chronos</i> : The Time Notebooks .....	26
Utter Metaphysical Banalities: The Vinyl Notebooks .....	29
Whose Is the Task of Thinking? .....	30
Heidegger's Lesson: A Technique of Thinking from Humble Things .....	32
A Failed Shipwreck .....	35
<b>Part I</b>	
<b>Question and Answer</b> .....	39
The Structure of the Question–Answer Model .....	39
The Role of the Socratic Question .....	41
References .....	43
<b>Ways of Self-Deception</b> .....	45
The Future .....	48
Dreams .....	48
Fanciful Ambitions .....	48
Plans, Concrete Projects .....	49
The Present .....	49
One's Own Set of Issues .....	49
External Solicitations .....	50
Concrete Work .....	50

The Past..... 51

    The Mistakes of the Past, Covered Over or Forgotten  
    by the Subconscious Will ..... 51

    One’s Own Defects..... 52

    Beautification of One’s Own Past: Making Myths and Legends ..... 52

Reference..... 52

**Utter Metaphysical Banalities**..... 53

    The Spatial Environment..... 53

    The Temporal Environment..... 57

**Nations** ..... 63

    Reference..... 70

**What Is Happening to Us?** ..... 71

    The Relationship with Nature ..... 72

    The Relationship with Our Fellows ..... 74

    The Relationship with the Divine..... 75

**Four Short Lectures**..... 77

    About Freedom and Subjection..... 77

    Why Pure Dialogue Is Not Possible..... 78

    About Man and Woman ..... 80

    About the Ocean of Forgetting..... 83

**Part II**

**Socrates: Philosophy Confronts the City**..... 89

    1. The Oracle ..... 91

    2. The Investigation..... 92

        a) Introduction: The Phenomenological Basis of the Investigation ..... 92

        b) Knowing—Not Knowing ..... 94

        c) Life—Death..... 96

        d) Good—Evil ..... 97

    3. Excursus: The Socratic Method ..... 98

        a) ‘I Do Not Know’ As the Origin of Any Method..... 98

        b) The Socratic Method ..... 101

    4. The Results of the Investigation ..... 106

    5. The Confrontation ..... 107

    6. Epilogue ..... 109

    References ..... 111

**Comments on the *Philebus*** ..... 113

    1. The Horizon of Discussion..... 114

    2. The Type of the Dialogue..... 115

    3. Introduction: The Dispute Over What Exactly Is Good  
    for Humankind (11a–c)..... 115

4. The Silence of Philebus (11c) .....	116
5. The Theme of Similarities and Differences (11d–14a) .....	117
6. The Theme of the One and the Multiple (12d, 15e) .....	117
7. The Logical Plan of the Discussion (14b) .....	117
8. A Short Exposition of the Theory of Ideas (15b–c) .....	118
9. The Disorder That Appears in Speech (15d–e) .....	118
10. The Dialectical Method (16b–18b) .....	119
11. The Problem of Mixture (18d–22c) .....	121
12. The Four Supreme Genera (23c–27c) .....	121
13. False Pleasures and Pains (31b–38b) .....	123
14. The Painter and Scribe in the Soul (38b–39c) .....	124
15. False Pleasures and Pains: Conclusion. Types of False Pleasure (39c–50e) .....	125
16. Pure Pleasure: Pleasure as Generation or Becoming (51a–55b) .....	125
17. The Problem of Knowledge (55b–59d) .....	126
18. Happiness Is a Life in Which There Is Mixture (59d–64d) .....	127
19. Measure, the Beautiful, the True. The Final Hierarchy. Epilogue (64d–67b) .....	128
References .....	129
<b>The World We Live In</b> .....	131
The Riddle of the Intellect .....	131
What Is an Intellectual? Anaxagoras, Fragment A 29 .....	134
Aristotle and the Constituting of Science .....	138
Leisure and Wonder .....	139
The Question and the State of Questioning .....	141
The Four Fundamental Questions .....	141
Excursus: The Correlation Between Knowledge and Reality .....	143
Abstracting and Exactness .....	144
First Principles .....	145
The Alienation of Science .....	146
The Enclosing of Science with Descartes .....	148
Reason Equally Distributed .....	149
The Pathways of Reason: Doubt .....	149
The Enclosing of Science .....	151
Epilogue .....	153
References .....	155
<b>Alexandru Dragomir: Fragments of a Portrait</b> .....	157
<b>Contributors</b> .....	163
<b>Index</b> .....	165